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WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today released the following statement as discussions between Congressional Leadership and the President Obama continued on raising the debt ceiling.

"Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are a covenant we have made with every American. Seniors and our nation's poor did not cause our deficit, and they should not be asked to solve a problem they didn't create. We have been spending at least \$12 billion a month in Iraq and Afghanistan and just extended the unpaid-for Bush tax cuts. If we want to stop wasteful spending, that is where we should start.

"I believe President Obama shares my desire to protect the benefits of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid recipients. Rest assured that I will continue to stand with a loud chorus of my constituents to protect these vital programs upon which millions of Americans rely.

"As a nation, we must not default on past debt, which is what we will do if we do not lift our debt ceiling. We have obligations to pay our bills, and like any responsible American, we must live up to this obligation. However, I do not support attempts to cut benefits in Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid as part of a quid pro quo to paying our nation's bills."